

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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P 111632Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4325

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 4488

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (FORD, GERALD R.), NL

SUBJECT: GON'S INTEREST IN VISIT TO THE NETHERLANDS

BY PRESIDENT FORD

1. DURING SEPTEMBER 10 CONVERSATION WITH DCM TANGUY, MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION WESTERTERP VOLUNTEERED THAT AT THE FIRST COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING FOLLOWING THE SWEARING IN OF PRESIDENT FORD THERE WAS A DISCUSSION OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD IN DUE COURSE COME TO EUROPE. A CONSENSUS WAS REACHED THAT HE WOULD BE MOST WELCOME TO VISIT THE NETHERLANDS AT THAT TIME. WESTERTERP DID NOT RPT NOT THINK THAT THE CURRENT CONTROVERSY OVER THE PARDON OF FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON WOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THE GON'S FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT UNLESS, CONTRARY TO WESTERTERP'S EXPECTATION, THE CONTROVERSY CONTINUED AND BECAME A MAJOR DEVISIVE ISSUE UNDERMINING PRESIDENT FORD'S POSITION IN THE UNITED STATES.

2. WESTERTERP REFERRED TO CONVERSATIONS WITH THE DCM IN THE WINTER OF 1972-73 (WHEN WESTERTERP WAS STATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE PREVIOUS BIESHEUVEL-SCHMELZER GOVERNMENT) WHICH HAD TOUCHED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A VISIT BY PRESIDENT NIXON TO EUROPE THEN BEING BRUITED IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES. WESTERTERP RECALLED THAT HE HAD TOLD THE DCM FRANKLY, AS AN OLD FRIEND, THAT THERE WAS NO ENTHUSIASM ON THE PART OF THE THEN
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GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS NOR, IN HIS JUDGMENT, ON

THE PART OF THE DUTCH PEOPLE FOR SUCH A VISIT. HE
CONTRASTED THIS WITH THE POSITIVE INTEREST SHOWN BY THE
DEN UYL GOVERNMENT TOWARD A POSSIBLE VISIT BY PRESIDENT
FORD TO THE NETHERLANDS.
GOULD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: kelleyw0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974THEHA04488
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740254-0564
From: THE HAGUE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740954/aaaabtou.tel
Line Count: 66
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kelleyw0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 SEP 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <03 MAR 2003 by kelleyw0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GON'S INTEREST IN VISIT TO THE NETHERLANDS BY PRESIDENT FORD
TAGS: OVIP, NL, (FORD, GERALD R)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005